



A Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK) – Resources for Families

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing anxiety, stress and challenges for parents, caregivers and families. **Current challenges include:**

- Children out of school
- Families isolated indoors in close proximity for prolonged periods of time
- Potential family separation due to social distancing
- Child care challenges for essential workers
- Keeping children busy and entertained throughout the day
- Lack of technology for virtual school classes and completing school work
- Reduced access to community support services, education and play spaces
- Parents/caregivers having limited alone time or limited time for self-care. Self-care is crucial during this time as it is taking care of one's psychological and physical health.
- Loss of employment, reduced work hours, pay cuts
- Food insecurity
- Health concerns and psychological distress
- Increase in mental health and substance abuse problems
- Domestic/intimate partner violence
- Child abuse and neglect

What might benefit children and families during this time?

- Parents/caregivers practicing self-care; this may look different for each individual
- Social connectedness (family, friends, parenting support groups, virtual parenting groups)
- Practicing positive discipline with children
- Keeping a consistent routine and schedule
- Attempting to stay in touch with service providers (medical professionals, mental/behavioral health workers, and other child professionals)
- Aiming for 8 hours of sleep

- Eating a healthy diet
- Exercising
- If help is needed, reaching out to a trusted contact
- Medical and other service providers offering referrals and resources as needed
- Reducing exposure to news and social media
- Families creating new traditions and rituals together. These may include engaging in a special handshake or greeting when child wakes up in the morning, singing a song before bedtime or getting takeout from a favorite restaurant on a weekend night

How can pediatric providers help families during this time?

- Pediatric providers should be conducting virtual visits with children and families. During this stressful time, it will be important for providers to ask how families are doing and if they need help with resources or referrals for basic or other needs. Virtual visits can also be used to assess for child safety.
- Following-up with families after virtual visits to see if they have questions, need additional resources and encouraging families to reach out for help and stay in contact with service providers. Social media may also be useful in disseminating information to families on resources.
- Offering information on positive discipline during virtual visits as it is challenging to be a parent without a break.
- Reminding parents to be good “role models” for their children during this challenging time as children will sense parental stress.
- Reminding parents to take care of themselves by encouraging social connection, practicing self-care, mindfulness, yoga, meditation, and to exercise and do things they enjoy.
- Letting parents know they are not alone by empathizing with them, validating their feelings and providing hope.

Resources

Health Concerns

Parents or caregivers should call their child’s primary healthcare provider for most problems to see whether an in-person visit is needed. Children with urgent or severe problems should be taken to an emergency department.

Unemployment

Families may be experiencing loss of employment, reduced work hours, and pay cuts. The US Department of Labor and USA.gov websites provide information related to unemployment benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic, how to apply for these benefits, and links to states' specific websites regarding unemployment benefits.

www.usa.gov/unemployment

www.dol.gov/coronavirus/unemployment-insurance

Food Insecurity

Families may be experiencing food insecurity due to loss of employment, reduction in work hours, pay cuts, and fewer transportation options. The USDA Food and Nutrition Services has 15 different nutrition programs with information consolidated on the website below in addition to a National Hunger Hotline.

1-866-3-HUNGRY (English)

1-877-8-HAMBRE (Spanish)

www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19

Domestic or Intimate Partner Violence

Domestic or intimate partner violence may increase due to perpetrators and victims being in close proximity during the shelter-in-place period. The National Domestic Violence Hotline has a variety of options for how victims can get help.

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

1-855-812-1001 (video phone by the National Deaf Hotline)

“Chat Now” or “Chat in Spanish” at www.thehotline.org

Mental Health

Mental health concerns may rise due to increased stress, fear and anxiety.

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers a Disaster Distress helpline and text option to assist those experiencing emotional distress related to disasters.

1-800-985-5990 (English, Spanish-speakers can call the hotline and press “2”)

Text “TalkWithUs” for English or “Hablanos” for Spanish to 66746

www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website has ideas on coping with stress during this time.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse may increase due to stress, fear and anxiety.

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers a Virtual Recovery Resource Guide with virtual recovery programs, resources and supports, and hotline information.

www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf

- Shatterproof, a national non-profit organization, offers online recovery support groups.

www.shatterproof.org/blog/how-find-virtual-recovery-meeting?j=311756&sfmc_sub=147157203&l=83_HTML&u=10505959&mid=100004357&jb=292&utm_source=mc&utm_medium=email&utm_name=housefile&utm_term=VirtualRecovery&utm_content=

- Addiction Policy Forum and CHESS Health partnered with the Connections free smart phone app to support individuals in recovery.

www.addictionpolicy.org/connections-app

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect may increase due to families being under increased stress and in constant close proximity. During this time, children are not going about their typical routines and coming in contact with mandated reporters (teachers, social workers, day care and pediatric providers) that may typically recognize signs of abuse and neglect.

- Childhelp has information on phone numbers and website information for child protective agencies across the country and a national helpline.

1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

www.childhelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CPS-Reporting-June-2018.pdf

Parenting Resources

- The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center offers supportive resources for families. Their website includes information on how to talk with children about the COVID-19

pandemic, specific resources for children with developmental delays and disabilities, and information on how to support children’s emotional well-being.

www.ectacenter.org/topics/disaster/coronavirus-talking.asp

- An article discusses how to help families manage anxiety, stay active, and focus on overall family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

www.common sense media.org/blog/help-your-family-de-stress-during-coronavirus-uncertainty

- The Child Mind Institute has digital resources in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including Daily Facebook video chats with clinicians, remote evaluations and telemedicine, phone consultations regarding children at home, comprehensive resources for parents and daily email tips for parenting during the crisis.

www.childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/

- The Fussy Baby Network has a Fussy Baby Warmline for parents. Their resources include video home visits, parent web groups, Facebook Live Sessions for infant massage, baby yoga, play and connection ideas. There are currently NO FEES for Fussy Baby services during “shelter-in-place”. The helpline services are in English and Spanish.

1-888-431-BABY (2229)

Email: fussybaby@erikson.edu

Facebook: @FussyBabyNetwork

www.erikson.edu/fussy-baby-network/

- The National Parent Helpline is available 24/7. “Parenting is a critical job that is not always easy!”

1-855-4A PARENT (1-855-427-2736)

www.nationalparenthelpline.org

- Parenting for Lifelong Health has a website with parenting tips related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Resources are available in English as well as other languages.

www.covid19parenting.com/

Sources

Agrawal N. The Coronavirus Could Cause a Child Abuse Epidemic. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/opinion/coronavirus-child-abuse.html>. Published April 7, 2020. Accessed April 9, 2020.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Advises Parents Experiencing Stress over COVID-19. AAP.org. <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/The-American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Advises-Parents-Experiencing-Stress-over-COVID-19.aspx>. Published March 23, 2020. Accessed April 9, 2020.

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